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Pest Alert

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

Northeastern Area

NA-FB/P-21 Revised 5/89

GYPSY MOTH

LARVA . . . . . hairy caterpillar with 5 pairs
May-June of blue spots and 6 pairs of
red spots along the back.

PUPAE . . . . . pupal skins and pupa (females
July-August are larger than males).

ADULTS BY
EGG MASS . . . . . male brown; non-flying female.
July-August is white with small brown
markings.

EGG MASS . . . . . small larvae emerge the
August-May following May.

The gypsy moth has been a primary defoliator of hardwoods in the Northeastern United States since its introduction in 1869. Although Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and New England are generally infested, isolated infestations have been noted in some North Central, Southern, and Western Seacoast States and are now subject to eradication by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Oaks are the preferred host species but most species of trees and shrubs are defoliated by the gypsy moth when the preferred host is not available. or has been completely defoliated. However, ash, tulip poplar, locust, and sycamore are not attacked and black walnut is seldom attacked.

The potential spread of this insect is extremely high. The host range is extensive and artificial spread of the insect has increased the already high rate of dispersion by natural means. Artificial spread, the movement of egg masses and pupae on nursery stock, forest products, equipment, and all types of vehicles, can be reduced by close inspection of articles moving from infested to non-infested areas.

For more information contact your County Agricultural Agent, State Forester, State Entomologist, or State Extention Specialist.